

I. INTRODUCTION

Historic Resource Associates (HRA) contracted with the Roman Catholic Bishop of Fresno, a Corporation Sole, in order to address the options available for a Mariposa County Planning Commission Action, based originally upon staff recommendations 1 and 2 (refer to Major Historic Design Review Application No. 2012-054; St. Joseph's Church Site Work and Courtyard Renovations, July 6, 2012). Following hearings with the Planning Commission and discussion with Planning staff in the fall of 2012, revisions have been made to the original design plans for St. Joseph's Catholic Church by "The Building Design Group of Mariposa," (refer to Exhibits A-2; A-3; A-4; A-5; and D1). The most recent Planning staff recommendations and the recent revisions to the original design plans for the church form the basis for this report, which documents the significance and character defining features that comprise the historic St. Joseph's Catholic Church, addresses the California Environmental Act (CEQA) as it pertains to potential adverse effects to significant cultural resources, and examines issues related to the consistency with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings.

II. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The main purpose of the proposed Joseph's Catholic Church project, as originally defined in the Major Historic Design Review Application No. 2012-054, was to:

- ◆ Improve safety by providing a ramp into the church and reducing tripping hazards caused by cracked and uneven concrete;
- ◆ Provide a more formal place for church leadership to greet congregants after services;
- ◆ Facilitate the transport of caskets from the hearse to the church;
- ◆ Provide a place near the cemetery for people to sit or gather;
- ◆ Improve rain and shade protection for the church;
- ◆ Provide additional cooking/kitchen facilities for congregants; and
- ◆ Make room for an at-grade labyrinth to be installed in the courtyard.

While many of the same design solutions are proposed, the following revisions include:

- ◆ A symmetrical approach to the front entry of the church. 17R - A raised patio or staging area will be added to the south side of the front steps. See West elevation.
- ◆ Proposed pavilion is eliminated. Concrete flat work will remain per original plan.
- ◆ Proposed gazebo is eliminated. Concrete flat work will remain per original plan.
- ◆ Circular pattern added to center of the round slab at the rear behind Mother Mary. To balance with the front courtyard.
- ◆ The proposed trees will remain at 50R - See general layout. This creates shade and keeps the same feel as what is there currently.
- ◆ Corners of the steps are softened by rounding.
- ◆ Guard rails and grasping rails will be white to help camouflage their appearance.
- ◆ Landscaping at 5R - See general layout - will be tall to conceal ramp and stage walls.
- ◆ Landscaping at 14R will be all low-lying with no trees in planter strips.
- ◆ 51R – a historical information plaque will be added with historical info about the church, rectory, and cemetery.
- ◆ Wall mount lights on front of church are to be removed.
- ◆ The formerly proposed labyrinth has been eliminated.

According to the most recent proposal, the existing features, all of which are non-contributing elements of the historic property, that will be removed include:

- ◆ All of the existing concrete between and in front of the garage, rectory, and church, including most sets of stairs. The only stairs to remain intact are those in front of and behind the rectory (three sets: one in front, one on the side toward the rear, and one between the rectory and garage);
- ◆ Tree, picnic table, and church-shaped kiosk located between the church and rectory (kiosk to be relocated);
- ◆ Tree stump located in the front corner of the rectory;
- ◆ Tree located at the base of the stairs in front of the church;

- ◆ Fence located adjacent to the cemetery and between and perpendicular to the garage and church on the cemetery side;
- ◆ Stone wall located in front of the church on both sides of the stairs (relocated);
- ◆ Portions of stone walls located in the front retaining walls on either side of the existing stairs (stones may be re-used when wall is filled after stairs are relocated);
- ◆ Portions of cinderblock retaining walls located near the front corner of the church;
- ◆ Monument located in front of the church at the base of the stairs (monument will be relocated);
- ◆ Display light and pole located in front of the church at the base of the stairs; and
- ◆ Turf/grass located in front of and between the church and rectory.

As noted above, the two most contentious items of the proposed design were the pavilion and the gazebo, both of which have been eliminated from the current design proposal.

III. REGULATORY SETTING

The regulatory setting for this project relies upon CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5, in order to determine the significance of a project's impact and potential mitigation measures on a historic resource. As per CEQA 15064.5. *Determining the Significance of Impacts to Archeological and Historical Resources*. A project with an effect 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, if:

- (1) Substantial adverse change in the significance of an historical resource means physical demolition, destruction, relocation, or alteration of the resource or its immediate surroundings such that the significance of an historical resource would be materially impaired.
- (2) The significance of an historical resource is materially impaired when a project:
- (3) Demolishes or materially alters in an adverse manner those physical characteristics of an historical resource that convey its historical significance and that justify its inclusion in, or eligibility for, inclusion in the California Register of Historical Resources; or

- (4) Demolishes or materially alters in an adverse manner those physical characteristics that account for its inclusion in a local register of historical resources ...; or
- (5) Demolishes or materially alters in an adverse manner those physical characteristics of a historical resource that convey its historical significance and that justify its eligibility for inclusion in the California Register of Historical Resources as determined by a lead agency for purposes of CEQA.

Generally, a project that follows the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic Buildings ... Shall be considered as mitigated to a level of less-than-significant impact on the historic resource.

The principal analysis for the proposed project at St. Joseph's Catholic Church was measured against the "*Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, and Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic Buildings*" (www.nps.gov/hps/tps/standguide/2010). The standards provide general guidance and a methodology for choosing the appropriate treatment. The four treatment approaches are **Preservation, Rehabilitation, Restoration, and Reconstruction**, outlined below in hierarchical order and explained as follows:

Preservation, the first treatment, places a high premium on the retention of all historic fabric through conservation, maintenance and repair. It reflects a building's continuum over time, through successive occupancies, and the respectful changes and alterations that are made.

Rehabilitation, the second treatment, emphasizes the retention and repair of historic materials, but more latitude is provided for replacement because it is assumed the property is more deteriorated prior to work. Both Preservation and Rehabilitation standards focus attention on the preservation of those materials, features, finishes, spaces, and spatial relationships that, together, give a property its historic character.

Restoration, the third treatment, focuses on the retention of materials from the most significant time in a property's history, while permitting the removal of materials from other periods.

Reconstruction, the fourth treatment, establishes limited opportunities to re-create a non-surviving site, landscape, building, structure, or object in all new materials. Before choosing the most appropriate treatment for a building, careful thought should be given to why a building is deemed to be historically significant, and the characteristics or features that add to that significance.

This design proposal chooses a mix of two "Treatment" options - Preservation and Rehabilitation. These two options place a premium on the retention of all or most historic fabric or character defining features of the historic property and flexibility on improving the site for safety, aesthetics, and better access into a public space, namely the church itself.

IV. STUDY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The focus of the previous submittal and this revised report, is to define the period of significance and character defining features of St. Joseph's Catholic Church, and as previously noted apply the "*Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, and Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic Buildings*" (www.nps.gov/hps/tps/standguide/2010).

In this case, the significant property(s) includes the church, rectory, and cemetery. The applicable period of significance is circa 1850s-1940. This period of significance is consistent with the "Mariposa Town Historic District," nominated to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) in 1991. Thus, most of what is considered to be the existing material landscape, such as the concrete walkways, mortared stone retaining walls, railing, concrete steps and stoop, etc., lie outside the historic period of significance, since those improvements appear to have been added in the 1950s forward. Therefore, consistency with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards has less applicability to the aforementioned project than it does with any direct or visual alterations to the three significant properties that comprise the historic resource, namely the church, rectory, and cemetery. Finally, the proposed project, including any revisions, will not alter the function or use of the church itself, and will in effect avoid alterations to the historic fabric of the church by modifying its ingress and egress in such a manner as not to reconfigure door openings or wall surfaces.

In the design process, several other alternatives were considered, but rejected because they would do direct harm to the superstructure of the historic church, resulting in potential adverse effect defined under CEQA. Those alternatives include (1) providing access into the church through the its north elevation by removing and widening the existing "historic" entry door and modifying the access from the rear of the chapel through a ramp; and (2) by cutting a opening in the rear of the church, which would damage non-historic fabric, but again alter the interior space of the rear of the church to accommodate and interior ramp to the access the church pews and main sanctuary. Neither option would provide safe and suitable access into the front of the church, which has been the primary entrance since its construction in the 1860s. A third alternative was considered by introducing an opening along the south elevation of the church, but this alternative was rejected a infeasible due to elevation differences and poor access due to slopes.

The current design, including the recent changes, eliminates any direct impact to the church itself, and dramatically minimizes any indirect effects to the significant character defining features that make the property a significant resource. In conclusion, taking into account the State Historical Resources Commission finding in 1991, Mariposa County Planning Commission staff recommendations in 2012, the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, and Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic Buildings* (www.nps.gov/hps/tps/standguide/2010), the amended aforementioned design changes, and the fact that the proposed project will in no way alter the "historic" fabric and function and use of the historic property, it is determined that the proposed Major Historic Design Review Application No. 2012-054 (project as revised) **will not result in an adverse effect**, either directly or indirectly, to the "significant" or "character defining" elements that make St. Joseph's Catholic Church, Rectory, and Cemetery a significant resource under CEQA, California Register, or as a NRHP property.

V. ST. JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC CHURCH HISTORY

St Joseph's Catholic Church is sited atop a knoll on the south side of Mariposa overlooking the town. The land where the church, cemetery, and rectory now reside was donated to the church by R.S. Miller. The construction of the church began in 1862, composed of sugar pine with hand planed clapboard siding, fascia and frieze, with a metal-sheathed steeple. Completed in late 1862, and dedicated on January 18, 1863, the church retains its original bell cast in 1862. Catholic services were reportedly held in Mariposa in the 1850s in a makeshift structure or perhaps outdoors. The church was built under the direction of Father Louis Auger who was the pastor of Sonora and Mariposa at the time. Later Father Guerin acted as pastor, followed in the 1890s by Father Mulhull. The church had limited use in the 1920s, but by the late 1920s, with increased tourism and an expanding economy, the church again witnessed increased use and in the same year (1927) a rectory was built on the parcel at a cost of \$12,000. Still, by the 1930s, the church and church grounds looked much the way they did in the 1860s, with very limited landscaping, except a board fence that was later replaced by a wire fence to keep livestock and animals from entering the church grounds.

In 1952, sidewalks were constructed around the church and rectory with the assistance of Winnie and Peal Williams. The fieldstone rock retaining walls were built by Fr. Walsh and George Adams who lived on the south side of the church property. In 1953, numerous repairs were made to the church, including a perimeter cement foundation and an improved and re-enforced tower with new heavy timbers. In the spring of 1954 the old shingle roof was replaced with a metal roof, and in 1955 the Our Lady of Grace statue was erected in the common area. In 1957 the road around the church was widened and a long rock retaining wall was built.

Due to a growing congregation, in 1958 the church was divided, separating the sanctuary and nave by 18' allowing five more pews inside and providing 50 more seats. Two Gothic like windows were added with modern glass and different moldings chosen to differentiate from the original window glass. Since the 1980s, only minor improvements have occurred to the church, including another restoration of the tower and the addition of the Parish Hall in 1991 (notes courtesy of Leroy Radanovich, July 2012).

VI. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

St. Joseph's Catholic Church is an example of the Carpenter Gothic form of architecture, common between 1850–1880, although in basic form it shares many elements found in Greek Revival buildings of the same period. The Gothic Revival style, less popular nationally than the competing Greek Revival and Italianate styles, was used primarily for churches, colleges, and rural houses. Steeply pitched roofs, cross gables, and lacy verge boards (gable trim, also called bargeboards) are the signatures of Gothic Revival houses. The most common plan is symmetrical with a central cross gable and a one-story porch. Typical features include hood molds over pointed arched or rectangular windows and doors, towers, and bay windows. The church rectory, built in 1927, is a departure from the Gothic style, having been designed in the Craftsman school of architecture. The adjacent Catholic cemetery reflects the plan and design of other mid-nineteenth century cemeteries in the Mother Lode, including its location and placement of headstones.

The period of significance for the Mariposa Town Historic District was approximately 1849-1940. Most of the “contributing” historic properties in Mariposa were generally built prior to 1930. The principal historic “Character Defining Features” of St. Joseph's Catholic Church include:

- ◆ Sited on a gently sloping parcel facing the west
- ◆ Narrow rectangular plan (large rear addition) and a central nave
- ◆ Front gable
- ◆ Steeply pitched gable roof
- ◆ Horizontal hand-planed and milled clapboard exterior siding
- ◆ Symmetrical tower and steeple with wooden crenellations
- ◆ Lancet arched windows with stained glass top lights
- ◆ Spires on each corner of the tower and front corners of the church
- ◆ Centrally placed double wooden entry doors underneath the front gable

According to historic photographs (refer to Photograph Record), the church when originally built in 1862-1863 had only minimal landscaping that consisted of board fences that surrounded the church and cemetery. There were several mature native oaks to the left or north of the church, but no tree cover in the front on the slope leading down to present-day Highway 49. The Mariposa Mine once owned by John Charles Fremont lay immediately to the east of the church, the surrounding hills were largely denuded of any large timber, and there was evidence of gold mining immediately down slope of the church. Up to 1958 the church had only three vertically oriented lancet arched windows. The white painted board fence appears to have existed up until the early 1900s, when it was replaced with a wire fence (refer to Photograph Record).

Through the nineteenth century and first few decades of the twentieth century, the church had only minimal landscaping and entry into the church appears to have occurred from the north rather than its current configuration from down slope to the west (refer to Photograph Record, Photographs 5-6). This "lack of landscaping" appears to have remained through the 1930s, after the construction of the rectory. By the 1940s the front of the church had been terraced to address access and parking, although pedestrian and automobile access was still unpaved, and included at least one mortared rock retaining wall. By this time the wooden front steps had been removed and replaced with concrete steps and a concrete stoop (refer to Photograph Record, Photographs 6-7).

In 1952, the current church landscape began to take shape with additional concrete steps added west of the church entrance to access the driveway, and additional mortared stone retaining walls to support the terraced lawn area below the church. Access and parking at this time were along the west side of the church with parking to the south in a circular area carved out of the hill slope. The once young oak tree to the left or north of the church had dramatically grown, providing shade between the church and rectory (refer to Photograph Record). The following year a poured perimeter foundation was added to the church and the tower was rehabilitated with heavy timbers. In 1954, a metal roof was added to the church and in 1955 the erection of Our Lady of Grace was completed near the common area. In 1957, the access road around the church was widened and a mortared rock retaining wall was built to enhance its appearance and support the bank. In 1958, an 18-foot section was added to the front of the nave, allowing five additional pews and 50 more seats. Two new windows were added. Finally, in 1991 the Parish Hall was added to the south east of the church parcel.

In summary, the post-period of significance (post-1950s) modifications to St. Joseph's Catholic Church and grounds include a large addition in 1958 to the front (east elevation) of the nave, evidenced by a vertical molded exterior trim board and milled horizontal clapboards vs. hand-planed clapboards; the gabled sacristy and arched sanctuary were moved 18' east creating the space for the additional pews. Also, the later modifications (1990) included replacement of all the original sash windows below the stained-glass arch; a reproduced wooden rosette on the

front of the tower (1999) and some replaced millwork (1999); replacement of wooden mud-sills and dry rotted wall plates (1999); removal of the original front-entry wooden stairs (pre-1950) and their replacement with concrete stairs and stoop and steel square tube railing; slump-stone retaining walls surrounding the front entrance to the church and supporting the terraces; new access roads; paved parking; and the addition of the parish hall in 1991.

VII. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Reaching a conclusion regarding the appropriateness of the proposed revised project as described above for the St. Joseph's Catholic Church, a NRHP eligible property, requires a clear, but concise, understanding of why the historic church was found eligible for the NRHP. In applying the "*Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, and Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic Buildings*" (www.nps.gov/hps/tps/standguide/2010), it is critical to address the project within the most applicable "treatment" option before drawing any conclusions about its appropriateness. Most importantly, the question of the project itself, must be carefully considered, in regard to the "historic property" as defined by its character defining features. Finally, the significance of the church, as well as associated buildings, structures, and objects must be taken into consideration before reaching a conclusion regarding potential effects as per CEQA 15064.5. (*Determining the Significance of Impacts to Archeological and Historical Resources*).

Today, St. Joseph's Catholic Church is comprised of a Carpenter Gothic Revival style church or sanctuary completed around 1862-1863 with later additions; a wood-frame Craftsman style, two-story rectory built in 1927; a Catholic Cemetery that pre-dates the church back to the early 1850s; and a contemporary (ADA accessible) parish hall completed in 1991. No other features, including those that comprise the landscape, were called out as part of the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) nominating process for the property, and the property's significance as defined within the "Mariposa Town Historic District" is roughly 1849-1940. This apparent oversight in describing the property's historic "setting" is critical in determining the potential effects to the "significant" elements of the "historic" property, namely the church, rectory, and cemetery, since the project as proposed focuses almost solely upon exterior improvements such as access, landscaping, and safety.

In order to reach a conclusion regarding potential effects, the project design with its recent revisions, must be carefully considered in respect to the aforementioned "significant" or "insignificant" elements of the historic property. The following observations were used in reaching a conclusion regarding potential effects:

1. The project, as currently designed (refer to Exhibits A-2; A-3; A-4; A-5; and D1), other than the front stairs, presents no other direct modification or alteration to the church, rectory, or cemetery.

2. Numerous alterations to the original church and its setting have occurred since its construction in the early 1860s, including many alterations that occurred beyond the property's period of significance (circa 1849-1940).

3. The "significance" of the property falls under NRHP Criteria A (association with events of significance) and C (for its architecture).

In deciding the significance of the subject property, in 1991 the State Historical Resource Commission voted in favor of listing St. Joseph's Catholic Church on the NRHP based upon the summary statement of significance prepared by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) as follows:

The St. Joseph Catholic Church property consists of: the church itself, a Gothic Revival structure constructed in 1862; the associated cemetery, where burials began in the 1860s; and the rectory building; a Craftsman style residence built in 1927 [note that the Parish Hall had not been constructed when the property was under review by the Commission]. The integrity of each contributing element is relatively high. The church was altered with a new section inserted in 1958, but this change does not detract from the overall appearance. Most burials and headstones at the cemetery date from the nineteenth century, and the rectory has not experienced major changes.

The property appears to be significant under Criteria A and C. The church building is a very fine example of a simple and straightforward Carpenter Gothic architecture. . . . The building is also significant in the institutional development of the region as the first Catholic church in Mariposa County. The cemetery, by virtue of its intimate association with the church, also appears to be a contributing element. A survey of all of Mariposa by the applicant and the OHP staff revealed that the rectory is the town's most elaborate example of Craftsman styling. Staff recommends listing at the local level of significance (Mary Bourne Lortie. January 28, 1991).

Taking into consideration the latter information, and when carrying out modifications to any historic properties it is important to consider:

- ◆ Maintaining the overall residential character of the property.
- ◆ Preserving the key architectural features of the building.
- ◆ Seeking a use that is compatible with the historic character of the property.
- ◆ A use that is closely related to the original use is preferred.
- ◆ Preserving the existing and/or historic character of a front yard or primary elevation.
- ◆ Design accessibility improvements in a manner that will preserve the historic character of the property, if commercial use is desired.

In this regard, and in keeping with CEQA 15064.5. *Determining the Significance of Impacts to Archeological and Historical Resources*, the State Historical Resources Commission finding in 1991, Mariposa County Planning Commission staff recommendations in 2012, and the "*Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, and Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic Buildings*" (www.nps.gov/hps/tps/standguide/2010), the proposed amended project design changes (January 2013), and the fact that the proposed project will in no way alter the "character defining features" and "historic" function and use of the property, it is determined that the proposed Major Historic Design Review Application No. 2012-054 (project) **will not result in an adverse effect**, either directly or indirectly to the elements that make Joseph's Catholic Church, the Rectory, and Cemetery a NRHP property.

VIII. PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

Dana E. Supernowicz, Principal Architectural Historian of HRA, received his Bachelor of Arts in 1978 from University of California, Irvine with an emphasis in planning and community studies and his Master of Arts in 1983 from California State University, Sacramento in history with a concentration in California history and architecture. Supernowicz entered the cultural resource profession in 1976 and has worked for the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, California State Department of Parks and Recreation, State Historic Preservation Office, California Department of Transportation, as well as city and county governments throughout California, Nevada, Oregon and Washington. Supernowicz meets the Secretary of Interior's Professional Qualification Standards for architectural history, archaeology, and history, pursuant to the Code of Federal Regulations, 36 CFR 61, Appendix A.

IX. REFERENCES

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