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Cultural Resource-Historical Evaluation

**Cultural Resource Evaluation for
5537 Solano Avenue
Napa County, CA**

By
Juliana Inman Architect
May 25, 2015
Revised May 6, 2016

Prepared for
Brion Wise
35 E. Napa Street, Suite B
Sonoma, CA 95476

Results: Historic Resource Retains Integrity
Acres: 50+/-
Lead Agency: Napa County Conservation, Development and Planning

INTRODUCTION

Juliana Inman Architect completed an architectural and historical evaluation of the barn located at 5537 Solano Avenue, Napa County, California, as requested by the property owner, Brion Wise. Buildings on the property include a late 19th century dwelling, a garage/shed and the subject wood frame and stone barn. The property has not been listed in a local inventory or on the California Register of Historic Places.

The purpose of this study is to determine if the property meets the criteria for inclusion on the California Register, based on the eligibility criteria found in Title 14 CCR, §4852. Further, this study determines whether alterations to the property affect its eligibility for listing in the California Register or in a local inventory.

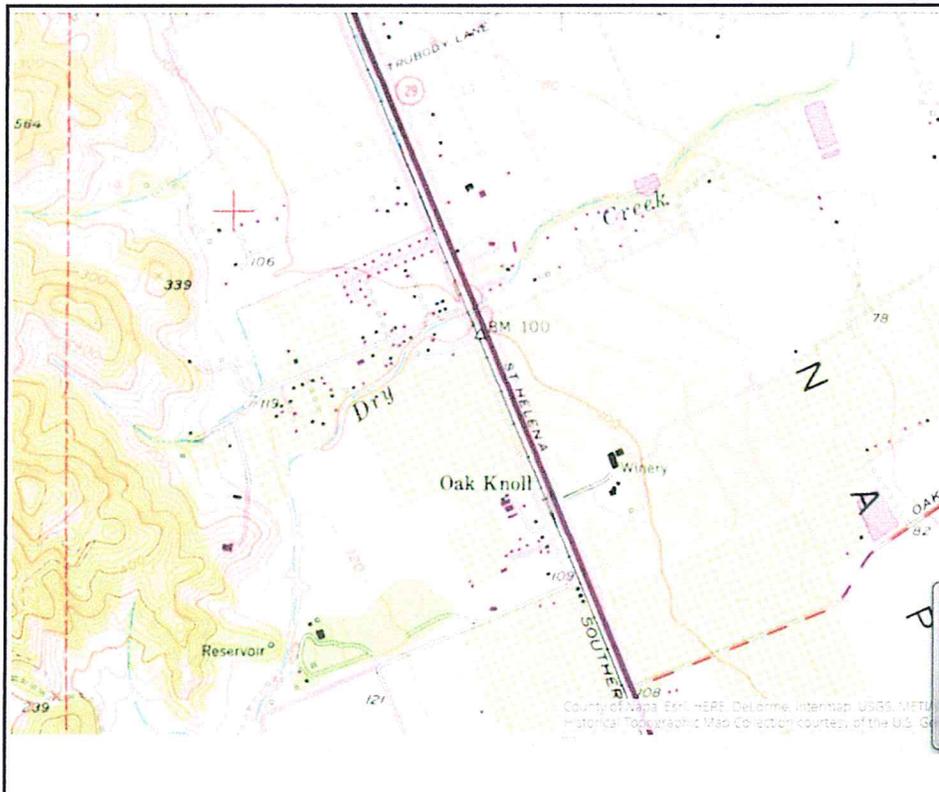


Figure 1. Project vicinity map (source: adapted from the USGS/ESRI topographic map.)

REGULATORY CONTEXT

This study follows the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), which mandate that cultural resources be considered as part of the environmental review process. Resources within the study area are inventoried and evaluated in terms of importance. Then an assessment of potential project effects is done for the resources found to be important.

This property was evaluated in April 2015 by Juliana Inman, Architect.

Significance Criteria

According to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) regulation, historic resources are automatically eligible for the California Register if they have been listed in and determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NR) or the California Historic Landmarks

program. Historic resources included in historic resource inventories prepared according to the California State Office of Historic Preservation (SHPO) guidelines (and included in the State Inventory of Historic Resources) or designated under county or city historic landmark ordinances are presumed eligible if the designation occurred during the previous five years. Designations and surveys over five years old must be updated before their eligibility can be considered.

The criteria for eligibility for listing in the National Register are virtually the same as for the California Register. To meet the National Register standards, a property must meet these same criteria, be associated with an important historic context, and retain the historic integrity of features that convey significance (National Park Service, 1991).

The importance of a resource is measured in terms of criteria for inclusion on the California Register (Title 14 CCR, §4852) listed below. An important historical resource is one which:

1. Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history, or the cultural heritage of California or the United States.
2. Is associated with the lives of persons important to local, California, or national history.
3. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values.
4. Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important to the prehistory or history of the local area, California or the nation.

In addition to meeting one or more of the above criteria, eligibility for the California Register requires that a resource retains sufficient integrity to convey a sense of its significance or importance.

The California Register regulations define “integrity” as “the authenticity of an historic resource’s physical identity, evidenced by the survival of characteristics that existed during the resource’s period of significance” (State Office of Historic Preservation, 1997). These regulations specify that integrity is a quality that applies to historic resources in seven ways: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. A property must retain most of these qualities to possess integrity. An Assessment of Integrity is included below.

STUDY PROCEDURES

In reviewing this resource, online databases such as the Online Archive of California were searched. A detailed field examination of the resource was conducted on March 24, 2015. Photographs were taken on March 24, 2015. Alterations to the resource were noted and described in the Property Description section of this report.

HISTORICAL SETTING

The barn at 5537 Solano Avenue is located in the western portion of the current Oak Knoll American Viticultural Area (AVA), seen in an historical USGS map in Figure 1. The setting is rural agricultural land near the urban edge of the City of Napa and south of the town of Yountville, CA, former home of pioneer George C. Yount.

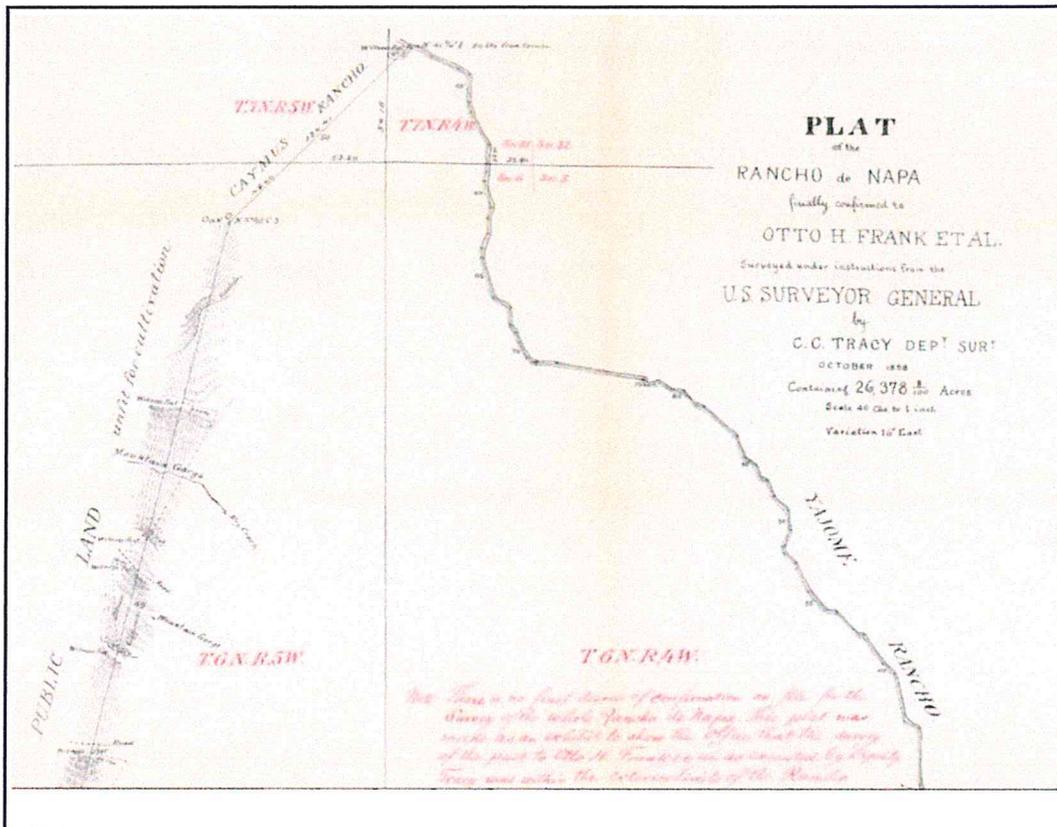


Figure 2. Study location in the *Rancho de Napa* (Plat of the *Rancho de Napa*, finally confirmed to Otto H. Frank et al. : [Napa County, Calif.] / Surveyed under instructions from the U.S. Surveyor General ; by C.C. Tracy, Depy. Surr)

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The historical context for this property is that of prime farm land north of the City of Napa and south of the historic property of George C. Yount. George Yount was granted the *Rancho Caymus* in 1836 by Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo. The 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo assured that land grants would be honored. Napa County was formed in 1850 as one of the original counties in California. Parts of Napa County were added to Lake County in 1861. In 1851 the U.S. Congress passed "An Act to Ascertain and Settle Private Land Claims in the State of California" which required all holders of Spanish and Mexican land grants to present their title for confirmation before the Board of California Land Commissioners. Land from titles not confirmed became part of the public domain. This Act placed the burden of proof of title on landholders and initiated a lengthy process of litigation that resulted in most Mexican Californians, or Californios, losing their titles. While 604 of the 813 claims brought before the Board were confirmed, most decisions were appealed to U.S. District Court and some on to U.S. Circuit Court and the Supreme Court. The confirmation process required lawyers, translators, and surveyors, and took an average of 17 years to resolve. The records of the District Court cases, the Land Case Files, were deposited on permanent loan in The University of California Bancroft Library by the U.S. District Court in 1961. The *Rancho de Napa* grant was finally confirmed to Otto H. Frank, et al. In 1858. The adjacent *Rancho Caymus* was finally patented to George C. Yount in 1863. In the map shown, lands not confirmed to original grantees became public lands. Hillsides in Figure 2, just to the west of the barn location, are indicated as "Public Land" and "unfit for cultivation."

The historical context for this property is that of a prime agricultural site in the Napa Valley floor, north of the western dry creek, labeled "Dry Creek" on early maps, see Figure 2, 1858 map showing the project area. There were several "dry creeks" that entered the main valley floor and

then fanned out before entering the Napa River. The property is located near the northern end of the *Rancho de Napa* or "*Rancho Napa*," which was a 22,718-acre (91.94 km²) Mexican land grant given in 1838 by Governor Juan Alvarado to Salvador Vallejo. The grant extends along the Napa Valley, north of present day Napa. Salvador Vallejo subdivided and sold much of the Rancho in 1847.

New England native Joseph W. Osborne acquired 1,100 acres of the *rancho* in 1851. He developed a great agricultural estate that he named "Oak Knoll." Osborne may have made the first wine from Zinfandel in California at this location. He planted Zinfandel from nurseryman Frederick W. Macondray at his Oak Knoll vineyard just north of Napa. In 1856 his estate was named "best farm in California" by the State Agricultural Society. Osborne was murdered by his former employee, Charles Brittan on April 18, 1863. The subject property is located on the valley floor just north of the Osborne "Oak Knoll" estate home and the largest remaining stand of native white oak (*Quercus Lobata*) in the Napa Valley (see page 43 of the [Napa Valley Historical Ecology Atlas](#).) This property may have been part of the original Osborne estate.

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

The barn at 5537 Solano Ave is a rare California example of a "bank barn." A bank barn is a building form native to the United Kingdom, and is also found in Norway, France, Italy and the United States. This form was also called a "basement barn" in parts of the eastern United States. Where a high ceiling and door openings at the upper level exist, this style of barn may also be called a "high drive barn." Search of internet resources show one other bank barn in California, the Mills Barn at the California State Park Burleigh H. Murray Ranch in San Mateo County. The State Park brochure claims that "the Mills Barn is the only building of this type in California." Finding this barn in Napa County indicates that there are at least two in the state.

This late nineteenth century barn is a front-gable barn with double sliding doors and symmetrical shed sides. The eastern shed has an extension with small animal pens and low roof. The exterior is clad with redwood boards with no battens. A rough rubble stone retaining wall supports the drive that circles the eastern side of the barn and serves the upper level of the structure. This roadway extends beyond the barn and provides ground level access to the barn from each of the two levels. Since the upper level doors and framing allow for passage of a wagon, this could be considered a "high drive barn." There are no hay hoods on either side of the barn, since fodder could be unloaded directly from a wagon into the high-ceilinged storage area. The original roof material was wood shingle. The original roof material is still in place on the barn, as well as a composition or roll-roofing layer topped by corrugated metal roofing.

A building type used frequently for wine production in Napa County is the "gravity flow" winery building, which provides ground level access to lower and upper levels of the winery. There are examples of entirely wood frame, stone with wood frame above, and all-stone construction in Napa County. Nearby in the Oak Knoll AVA is the all wood frame Eschol winery (now known as Trefethen), commissioned by James and George Goodman and constructed in 1886 by a Scottish sea captain named Hamden McIntyre.



Figure 3. Front of the barn (north) showing double sliding doors and hayloft doors above.

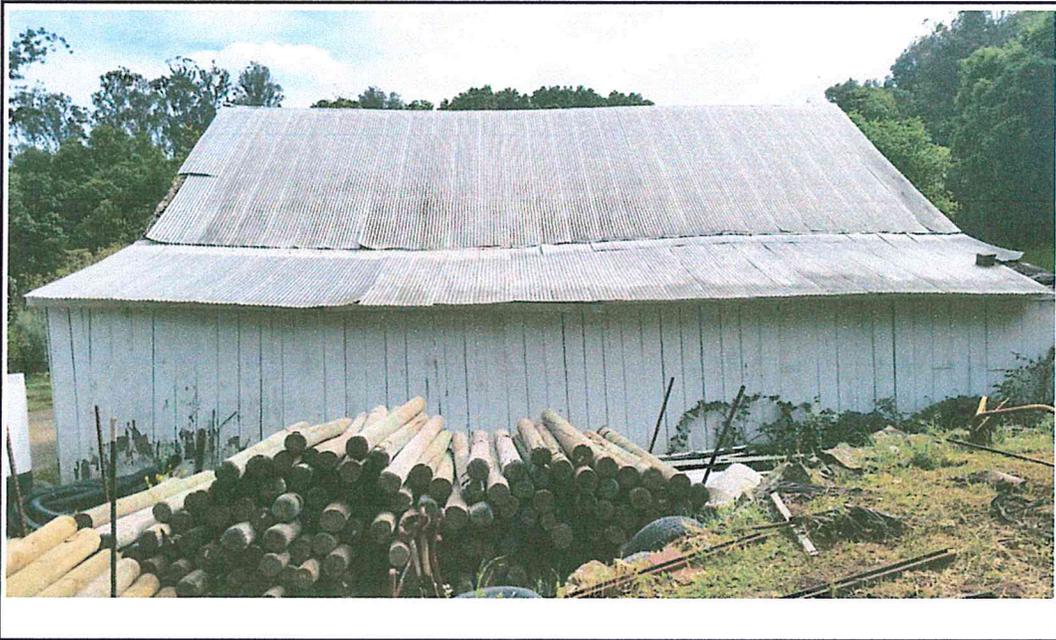


Figure 4. West side of the barn showing metal roof and slope up to the upper driveway.

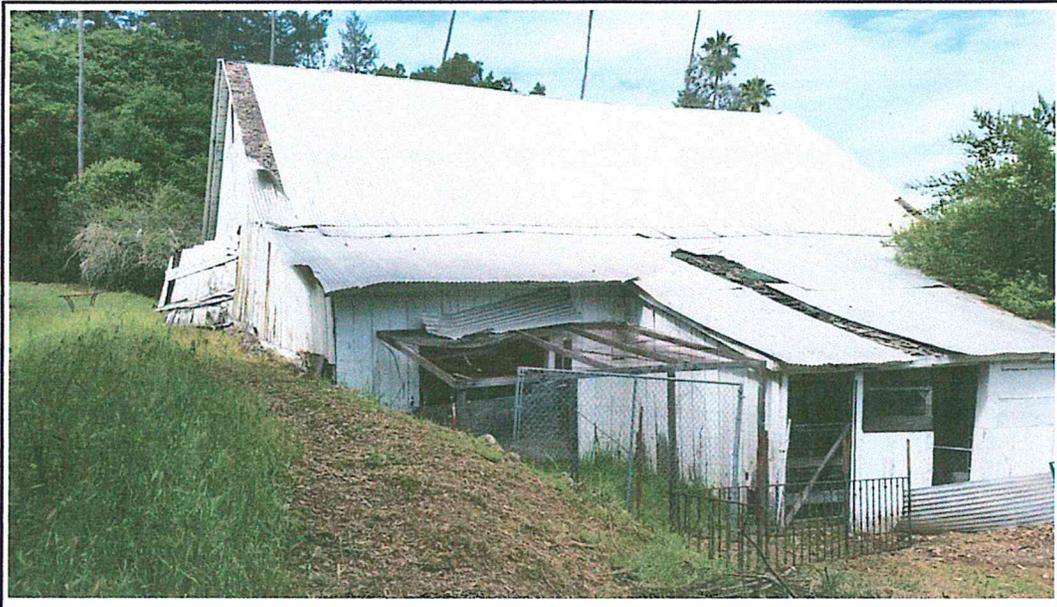


Figure 5. Oblique rear view showing the east side with animal pens, original wood shingles and upper drive on the south.

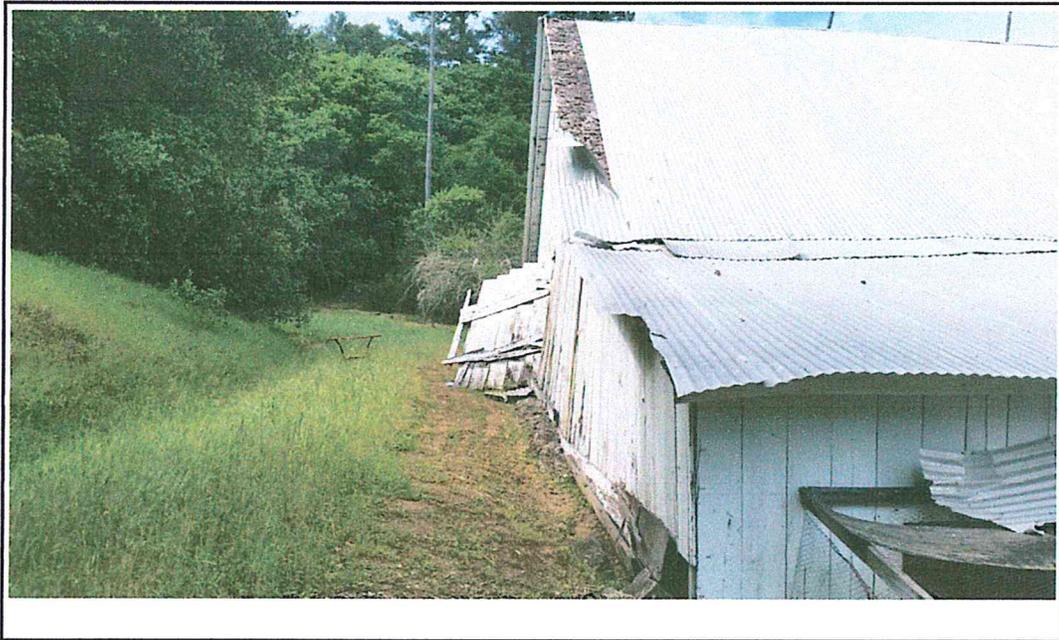


Figure 6. Rear view showing drive at upper level of the “bank barn.”



Figure 7. Interior showing failed stone retaining wall at lower level.

The condition of the upper drive stone retaining wall and the south wall of the bank barn is in poor structural condition. Part of the stone wall has collapsed, and the barn has shifted toward the north as a result. Efforts have been made to stabilize the structure, but the building needs repair and retrofitting to survive.



Figure 8. Interior from upper bank drive doors, showing framing.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this evaluation is to determine if the barn on this property is historically significant based on the California Register criteria. A resource acquires significance with its association with an important event or pattern of history; through association with an important person; because it represents a particular type, period, region, or method of construction, the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values; or because it contains information that can be studied to enhance our understanding of history.

In addition to meeting at least one of these criteria, eligibility for listing in the California Register requires that a resource retain sufficient integrity to convey a sense of its significance or importance.

Assessment of Significance:

After examining the site, studying the research and reports on this property, researching the physical evidence on the site, the following conclusions were reached regarding the four California Register criteria:

Criterion 1

In order to be considered important under Criterion 1, the property must be able to convey its importance in events or patterns that are significant in federal, state, or local history. This property is not directly tied to a particular event or pattern of events and does not meet Criterion 1 for inclusion on the California Register.

Criterion 2

This property is not associated with any notable individuals. The property is located near the original boundary of the *Rancho de Napa* but does not have structures associated with Joseph Osborne or George Yount. The property does not meet Criterion 2.

Criterion 3

The architectural significance of this barn is due to its rare type and method of construction. As only the second “bank barn” known so far in California, this qualifies as a rare building type. The property meets Criterion 3.

Criterion 4

Since Criterion 4 generally applies to archaeological resources or to resources that provide information about construction details that cannot be obtained in other ways, this property does not meet Criterion 4.

Assessment of Integrity:

The California Register regulations define “integrity” as “the authenticity of an historic resource’s physical identity, evidenced by the survival of characteristics that existed during the resource’s period of significance” (State Office of Historic Preservation, 1997). These regulations specify that integrity is a quality that applies to historic resources in seven ways: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. A property must retain most of these qualities to possess integrity.

1. Location: The barn is in its original location so retain integrity of location.
2. Design: The original design of the barn remains intact. The only alteration is the addition of the animal pens on the eastern side.

3. Setting: The setting has not been altered and remains a small farm building with vineyards currently occupying the farmed setting. The hillside retains native vegetation. The setting retains integrity.
4. Materials: The original material remains throughout most of the building. The condition of the building is fair to poor due to the structural failure of the original stone retaining wall and subsequent shifting of the wood framed barn structure. There is also extensive structural pest damage on the east, south and west sides of the building.
5. Workmanship: The original workmanship of the barn is still visible, though there have been additions on the east side of the barn.
6. Feeling: The overall form of the original barn is still communicated through the retention of original material, setting and workmanship.
7. Association: This property retains integrity of association with the complex of small farm buildings, residence, and farmed land on the site.

The barn at 5537 Solano Ave. retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. Overall the property retains all of seven qualities of integrity.

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT

The barn at 5537 Solano Ave. meets criterion 3 for inclusion on the California Register and retains adequate integrity to convey a sense of its significance and importance. The condition of the building is poor due to structural failure of the driveway retaining wall and structural pest damage to the building. Alterations may be required to retrofit the building for continued use. Recommendations for compliance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards have been incorporated into the revised plans for the project and described in the "Compliance and Recommendations" section of this report.

Secretary of the Interior's Standards Compliance and Recommendations:

Local governments in California generally reference compliance with The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings, in the design review conditions and/or negative declaration for projects. Compliance with these guidelines avoids any negative impacts on the existing buildings.

Since the barn retains integrity and is a qualified historical resource, compliance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for any discretionary permit is recommended in order to retain its integrity. Application of the California Historical Building Code is recommended, as well as use of incentives such as the Mills Act in rehabilitation of the barn.

Work proposed by the architect and engineer conforms to *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings*. Included with the comment is a citation of the Standard or guideline language involved, and specific recommendations are in **boldface**:

1. ***Standard 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.***

Use will change from an agricultural barn to commercial winery use. Character defining aspects of the barn, including location, setting, massing, scale, design, workmanship, and materials will remain.

2. ***Standard 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.*

The alteration of the building is described under Standard 9 below. Historical material will be retained.

3. ***Standard 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.*

No features from other buildings will be added. No conjectural features are proposed. New construction does not create a false sense of historical development. No inappropriate light fixtures, finishes or materials will be added.

4. ***Standard 4*** *Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.*

Existing alterations that have become part of the historic fabric of the building will remain. Inappropriate and poor quality additions will be removed. The “critter pens” infested with wood destroying pests will be removed and not replaced.

5. ***Standard 5*** *Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.*

Distinctive features and finishes will be not be removed. Original wood siding, trim and windows will remain or be restored. Access doors will be replaced with “in-kind” wood door replacements.

6. ***Standard 6*** *Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where 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.*

Replacement of historic materials will be done where original material has been broken, lost or weathered to an extent making repair infeasible. Replacement features will match the old in design, color, texture, visual qualities, and material. The failed stone retaining wall will be rebuilt to current road and building standards to provide continued access to the upper level of the barn. The barn has been moved approximately 12-18 inches off its original location by pressure from the collapsed retaining wall. Removal and replacement of the road and retaining wall will allow restoration of the barn and moving the barn back into its original position. **First plans reviewed for the project showed this roadway removed. The road to the upper level access has been restored to the plan and meets the Secretary of the Interior Standard.**

7. *Standard 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.*

No sand blasting or chemical treatments are proposed.

8. *Standard 8 Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures must be taken.*

Napa County standard archeological mitigation measures should apply to all ground disturbing activities on the site.

9. *Standard 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, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.*

New construction should be respectful of the historic building, while at the same time avoiding creating a false sense of what is historic on the site. The standards and guidelines allow for a wide range of design options and styles.

According to the Guidelines, "...additions should be designed and constructed so that the character-defining features of the historic building are not radically changed, obscured, damaged, or destroyed in the process of rehabilitation. New design should always be clearly differentiated so that the addition does not appear to be part of the historic resource." The Guidelines further recommend:

- Constructing a new addition so that there is the least possible loss of historic materials and so that character-defining features are not obscured, damaged, or destroyed.
- Designing new additions in a manner that makes clear what is historic and what is new.
- Design for the new work may be contemporary or may reference design motifs from the historic building. In either case, it should always be clearly differentiated from the historic building and be compatible in terms of mass, materials, relationship of solids to voids, and color.
- Placing new additions such as balconies and greenhouses on non-character-defining elevations and limiting and size and scale in relationship to the historic building.

The existing barn will remain in its historic setting and location. An open crush pad will be built at the side of the barn.

This reviewer recommends replacing the barn doors with wood barn doors similar to the original doors.

- 10. Standard 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.*

Original material will remain on the building. No addition is attached to the historic barn.

Reconstruction of the roadway continues the historic access to the upper level of the barn and makes possible rehabilitation and continued use of the building. Construction of the crush pad could be removed in future without damage to the historic barn.

Conclusions:

Work in the proposed project and as recommended herein meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.

MATERIALS CONSULTED

1. 36 CFR Part 800: Protection of Historic Properties, Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, 1986.
2. California CEQA Guidelines, amended 1 February 2001.
3. California CEQA Statute, amended 1 January 2002.
4. California Governor's Office of Planning and Research, "Thresholds of Significance: Criteria for Defining Environmental Significance: CEQA Technical Advice Series," September 1994.
5. California Department of Parks and Recreation "Historic Resource Inventory", DPR 523 form, UTM (Sonoma Quad), City Map Area II, Sonoma Historic Preservation League, April 1978.
6. California State Parks "More About the Park", Burleigh H. Murray State Park, available at this website as of 05/13/2015: http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=535
7. How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation Bulletin, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, by the staff of the National Register of Historic Places, finalized by Patrick W. Andrus, edited by Rebecca H. Shrimpton, (1990, Revised 1997, Revised for Internet 2002).
8. Instructions for Recording Historical Resources, California Office of Historic Preservation, March 1995.
9. Napa Valley Historical Ecology Atlas, Robin Grossinger, University of California Press, 2012.
10. National Register Bulletins 15 and 16A (National Park Service 1990b, 1991) NRHP Status Codes.
11. Online Archive of California, 2014, accessible at this web address as of 05/13/2015: <http://www.oac.cdlib.org/>
12. The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic Buildings or the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings, (1995), Weeks and Grimmer.