

ARCHITECTURAL RESOURCES GROUP

Architects, Planners & Conservators, Inc.



March 5, 2009

Leslie and Richard Mansfield
1291 Conn Valley Road
Saint Helena, CA 94574

Re: Mansfield Winery, National Register Eligibility

Dear Leslie and Richard,

It was a pleasure to meet with you and the project team last week. After visiting the historic winery structures, and reviewing the St. Helena Star articles you sent from the 1870s and 1880s, I am pleased to submit this letter with my opinion on the potential eligibility for listing these structures on the National Register of Historic Places. You both should be commended for the vision you have for the project, and the preservation community will be indebted to you for bringing these buildings back to life for their original winery purpose.

In looking at the potential eligibility of these historic structures for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, it is important to understand the criteria that are used to make this determination.

The National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) is the Nation's master inventory of known historic resources and includes listings of buildings, structures, sites, objects and districts that possess historic, architectural, engineering, archaeological or cultural significance at the national, state or local level. As described in National Register Bulletin Number 15, *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, a property must have both historical significance and integrity to be eligible for listing in the NRHP.

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To be significant, a property must be “associated with an important historic context.”¹ The National Register identifies four possible context types, of which at least one must be applicable to the property at the national, state, or local level. As listed under Section 8, “Statement of Significance,” of the NRHP Registration Form, these are:

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important to prehistory or history.²

Second, for a property to qualify under the National Register’s Criteria for Evaluation, it must also retain “historic integrity of those features necessary to convey its significance.”³ While a property’s significance relates to its role within a specific historic context, its integrity refers to “a property’s physical features and how they relate to its significance.”⁴ To determine if a property retains the physical characteristics corresponding to its historic context, the National Register has identified seven aspects of integrity:

Location is the place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred.

Setting is the physical environment of a historic property.

Design is the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space,

¹ National Park Service, National Register Bulletin 15, 3.

² National Park Service, National Register Bulletin 16A, 75

³ National Park Service, National Register Bulletin 15, 3.

⁴ Ibid., 44.



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structure, and style of a property.

Materials are the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property.

Workmanship is the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory.

Feeling is a property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time.

Association is the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property.⁵

Since integrity is based on a property's significance within a specific historic context, an evaluation of a property's integrity can only occur after historic significance has been established.⁶

According to the St. Helena Star newspaper accounts from December 7, 1880 and May 25, 1883, the original stone winery structure was constructed prior to 1880, with the adjacent and attached stone structure added in 1883. Located in the Conn Valley, the buildings were originally associated with the Franco-Swiss Winery, operated by G. Crochat and Company, which was owned by Germain Crochat, Charles Volper and Fred Metzner.

The existing historic structure appears eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A and C. Criterion A relates to associations with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history. Based on the date of construction, pre-1880 and 1883, and the production capacities listed in the St. Helena Star articles, these buildings were an important part of the early wine industry in the region, specifically in the Conn Valley. Criterion C relates to a property that embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction. The stone construction and three-story configuration of the

⁵ Ibid., 44-45.

⁶ Ibid., 45.

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historic buildings, set into a hillside, is characteristic of the typical method of construction for a gravity-feed winery of this period. In addition, although the structures are significantly deteriorated, they retain historic integrity, specifically the aspects of location, setting, design, materials and feeling.

It should be noted that these significant historic buildings are in serious threat of collapse. Portions of original stone walls have fallen, and areas of roof have collapsed. As recently as last week, additional sections of roof have caved in. We recommend that everything possible be done to expedite the project moving forward.

It has been a pleasure to assist you on this project. Please feel free to contact me with any questions regarding this letter.

Sincerely,

Naomi Miroglio
Principal

cc: File