

Chaffee Residence

2929 East Valley Road:

Appeal from HLAC Landmark
Designation

COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS HEARING

DECEMBER 10, 2024

Project Team

Homeowners, Mark Armenante and Young Sohn

Consultant Team:

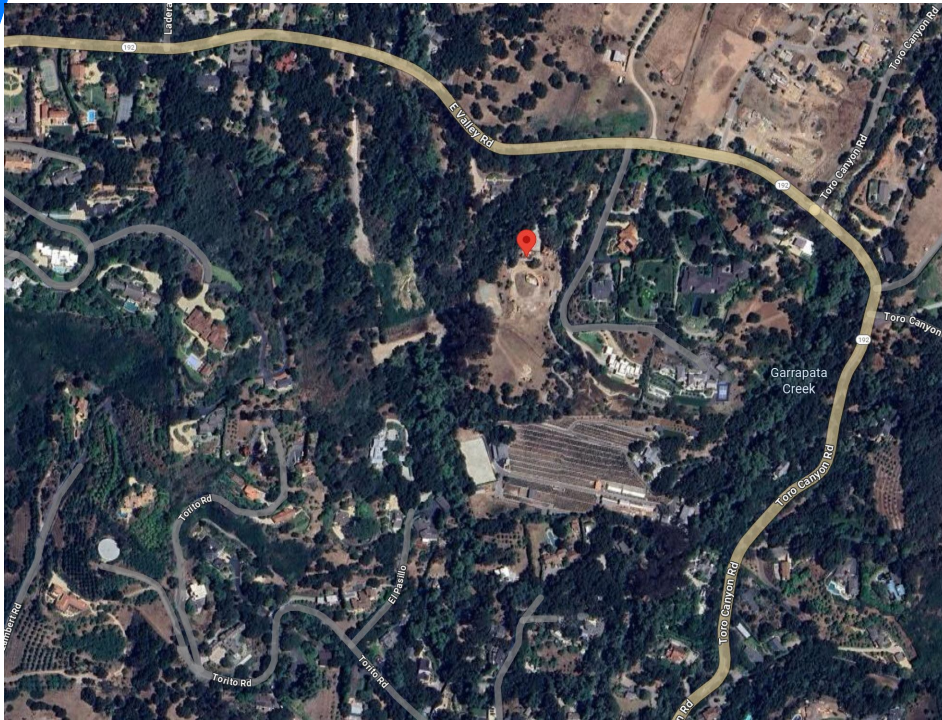
Amy Steinfeld, Land Use Attorney, Brownstein

Steve Fort, Principal Planner, SEPPS Land Use Consulting

Tim Hazeltine, Historian, Post/Hazeltine Associates

Richard Felix-Ashman, Architect, Richard Felix-Ashman
Design

Location of Private Residence



Property view from road: home not visible

The Chaffee Residence Property is in a rural area of the County (Toro Canyon), set back from East Valley Road (State Route 192) and is not visible to the public.

Homeowners

Have an appreciation for historic homes and preserve them with care and attention to detail

Have restored other historic homes

- 1929 historic Albert Farr home in San Francisco
- A farmhouse designed by Michael Bell
- Barton Myers home

Are private individuals:

- Concerned that the attention brought by these continued hearings led to trespassers with cameras jumping over the fence to their home
- Worried about copycat trespassers with the extra attention and especially if designation occurs

Why We Are Here

To request that the Board reject designation of this Property as a County Historic Landmark.

Why?

- This process has been atypical
 - HLAC did not work with homeowners prior to the nomination.
 - Homeowners do not want designation.
 - The home is not in danger; in fact, it is being carefully restored.
- Designation would be contrary to HLAC's mission, bylaws, and norms of conduct.

Designation is Contrary to HLAC's Mission

“The purpose [of the Historic Landmarks Advisory Commission (HLAC)] is to promote the economic welfare and prosperity of the County by preserving and protecting those places, sites, buildings, structures, works of art and other objects having a special historic or aesthetic character or interest, **for the use, education and view of the general public and to remind the citizens of this County and visitors from elsewhere of the background of the County.**”

County Code Chapter 18A-1 (Emphasis added.)

The Chaffee Residence is Not Open to the Public and Never Will Be

HLAC'S PURPOSE REFERENCES PUBLIC EDUCATION, USE, AND VIEW

- For example, the following properties are open to the public or members and are visible from public roads:
 - Mattei's Tavern
 - The Main-Begg Farmhouse
 - All Saints-by-the-Sea
 - Coral Casino
- Of the 53 landmarks, roughly 37 are open to the public or have public aspects
- Only 16 are private – 11 were designated or approved of by the owner and 5 are unknown (all unknown properties were designated pre-2002).
- 100% of post-2002 designations were spearheaded by owner or agreed to by owner.

THIS HOME IS PRIVATE:

- It is a private residence
- It is not open to the public, nor will it be
- No tours or educational events are proposed
- It is setback from the property line and is not visible from the road

HLAC Designation is Not Necessary to Protect this Historic Resource

- This home is a qualified “historic resource” pursuant to **CEQA**.
- All current (and future) projects require that a historian prepare a **historic resources report** confirming that any alterations, modifications or additions to the house, garage and sandstone features do not impact the resource.
- All current (and future) projects must comply with **Federal Secretary of Interior Standards**.
- All current (and future) projects must comply with **County’s Land Use and Development Code**.
- All current (and future) projects must comply with **County Historic Policies**.
- All current (and future) projects will be reviewed by the **South Board of Architectural Review (SBAR)**.

In short, designation of this Property, which would require future projects to be reviewed by HLAC, is unnecessary and duplicative; HLAC retains its ability to provide comments to SBAR.

The Current Home Restoration Project Complies with all Relevant Standards and Requirements

Toro Canyon Community Plan Standards

- Post/Hazeltine Associates & County Planning and Development found the Project consistent with local community standards for the home.

Santa Barbara County Policies

- Post/Hazeltine Associates & County Planning and Development also found the Project consistent with Santa Barbara County Historical & Archaeological Policies.

CEQA Regulations

- Post/Hazeltine Associates & County Planning and Development confirms the Project complies with CEQA.

The County's Policies, the Toro Canyon Community Plan and CEQA were adequate to ensure the existing projects are consistent and comply with all applicable historic standards.

Background of HLAC's Nomination Process

- Homeowners purchased the home in 2022, unaware that HLAC could designate the Property but aware of the significant repairs needed.
- Hired a team of renowned experts from architects and historians to designers and land use planners to guide them through County process and ensure all upgrades were compliant with local, state and federal laws, and that all upgrades were consistent with the historic nature of the sandstone structure.
- The Property was unexpectedly nominated by HLAC in 2024; there was no good faith effort on HLAC's part to work with homeowners.
- HLAC continued to push through the nomination despite homeowners' stated opposition.

HLAC Processes Comparison

TYPICAL EXPERIENCE

HLAC bylaws encourage working with the homeowners on the application if they are not the applicants.

HLAC has not designated a private home, which is not in danger, without owner approval that we could find.



HOMEOWNER EXPERIENCE

HLAC did not work with the homeowners and instead they ignored the homeowners' letters asking HLAC not to designate.

Homeowners have repeatedly asked HLAC not to designate their private home, which is being carefully restored.

Homeowners Oppose Designation

HLAC NORMS

- HLAC has not designated a home against the wishes of the owners in two decades, and records before that are unclear.
- There are benefits for some homeowners.

Many landmark owners sought designation, such as:

- Main-Begg Farmhouse
- All Saints-by-the-Sea Church
- Coral Casino
- Davison House
- Union Hotel

THIS APPEAL

- Homeowners have already complied with all regulations and standards.
- Do not need nor want additional layer of review.
- Have already spent tremendous resources ensuring the home will be both habitable and faithfully restored and maintained.
- The so-called benefits are unwanted or do not apply.
- Designation has thrust homeowners, unwillingly into the spotlight.

No Good Deed Goes Unpunished

Homeowners were the first to evaluate the home's historic significance.

They commissioned two extensive Historic Resources Reports.

HLAC has violated the homeowners' trust.

- Last minute unilateral nomination, using the report the homeowners had commissioned.
- Continued efforts to push through nomination despite requests to stop.

There is No Threat to the Home, it is Being Thoughtfully Restored

Homeowners have demonstrated repeatedly that the home is not in danger:

- They have hired numerous experts to preserve the home with care.
- They have complied with every regulation and standard.
- They have expended considerable resources at each step of the process.
- They are motivated by their appreciation for architecture and desire to preserve the historic nature of their home.
- The home's sandstone façade is not being altered.
- All future projects will undergo the same careful consideration under CEQA.



Designation Will Set Bad Precedent

Designating this Property over the homeowners' wishes will set a bad precedent and will have unintended consequences.

- Santa Barbara County already has stringent permitting standards.
- Knowing HLAC could designate a private home at any time could deter other careful stewards.
- The potential for additional, unwanted, time and labor-intensive review at HLAC by up to **11 commissioners** could prevent others from purchasing historic homes.

We respectfully request that the Board uphold the homeowners' appeal and deny designation of this Property as a County Historic Landmark