

Board backs more restoration work, improvements at Mission

By MARY SCHLEY

PLANS FOR seismic work, restoration and other improvements at the Carmel Mission’s museum, restrooms and courtyard received the blessing of the city’s historic resources board Monday and are set to be voted on by the planning commission Nov. 10.

The work is part of a second phase of restoration of the Mission, which is one of California’s most historic complexes. The first phase approved in 2010 included the seismic retrofit of the iconic Carmel Mission Basilica and other vital infrastructure work, and was completed in 2013.

Expired permits

Phase 2 was approved by the city in 2015, and while certain parts of the project — most notably the overhaul of the Mission’s large quadrangle courtyard and fountain — were completed, others, including new restrooms and the seismic retrofit of the Sir Harry Downie Museum, were set aside due to lack of funds, and

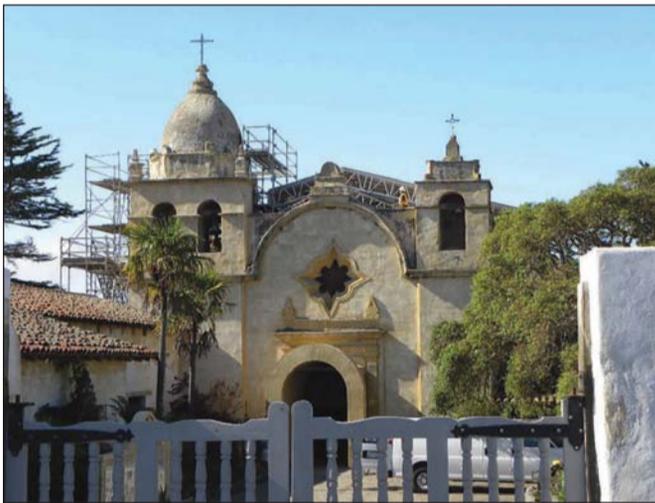
their permits expired.

At the Oct. 19 meeting, planning director Marnie Waffle asked the historic resources board to again approve the renovation work yet to be completed.

The plans call for an overhaul of the museum building, which was commissioned by Father Ramon Mestres in 1919, completed in 1921 and used as quarters for visiting priests until it was dedicated in 1980 as the Sir Harry Downie Museum, in honor of the Mission’s original restorer. The work calls for adding two new gender-neutral accessible bathrooms and removing two old ones.

“The old restrooms are not ADA compliant, so the proposal is to construct two ADA restrooms off to the side where the storage and exhibit rooms currently are, and then convert the former restrooms into additional space for the museum,” Waffle explained. The location of several old adobe walls set to be removed will be delineated on the floor with a darker tile, in case

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During the first phase of renovation at Carmel Mission in 2012, workers removed the roof from the Basilica so they could drill into the adobe walls and reinforce them with steel rods. The same is set to be done to the Sir Harry Downie Museum.

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MISSION

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anyone should want to rebuild them in the future, she said. Improvements slated for the forecourt area in front of the Basilica include removing paving and adding fill so the grade from the parking lot is not as steep, redoing walkways and moving planters as needed to ensure the paths are handicap accessible, and constructing a ramp to connect the courtyard to the fountain, gardens and the Downie Museum. A pedestrian gate will be built in a section of new plaster wall that's replacing a section of deteriorated adobe wall demolished over the summer because it was a safety hazard.

The plans were blessed by historians in 2015 and again this year.

Grave matters

Board member Karyl Hall wanted assurance the digging for the new bathrooms wouldn't involve a new sewer line going "through someone's grave," and Waffle said a

condition of the project requires having an archaeologist and a representative of the local Native American tribes present "to monitor all earth-moving activities."

And board member Jordan Chroman asked that none of the garden beds be altered unnecessarily. "Who will make the determination of which bed and how much will be moved around?" he asked. "Because if we're moving stuff around to move it around, and it's not really necessary, then I wonder, do we really need to move it?"

Architect Brett Brenkwitz explained the crew would try to retain as many of the original planters as possible and would reuse the stones — which are remnants from the foundations of former Mission buildings — when taking apart and rebuilding the curbs of the garden beds.

"This is a very large puzzle, because we're trying to give ADA access to a lot of different points on the site," he said. "But we're not going to willy-nilly make things larger or smaller just because we want to. We will retain the beds and curbs as much as possible."

He explained the work would also include fixing drainage so the Basilica would not get flooded, as happened during heavy rains several years ago, and renovating the courtyard's fountain, which was added by Downie in the

late 1930s.

The retrofit of the Downie Museum will employ the same methods as those used to shore up the Basilica.

"It's unreinforced masonry," he explained. "It's adobe — the walls are 2 feet thick."

Applause for everyone

The roof will be removed and holes drilled into the adobe walls from the top, then rods and grout inserted throughout.

"It doesn't bring it up to today's seismic codes, but it enhances the seismic stability greatly from where it is now," he said.

Walkways will be sloped and downspouts will be added to keep water away from the walls, since "water is the No. 1 enemy of adobe," and it's bad for the plaster, too.

"Mitigating rainwater and even landscape water is a big deal," Brenkwitz said. "So we will be including that in the working drawings when we get to that point."

The board members, minus Thomas Hood and Kathryn Gualtieri, who were absent, voted to find the plans in keeping with the Secretary of the Interior's standards for the preservation of historic properties.

"I really applaud everyone on the project," chair Erik Dyar said. "It's wonderful to see the continuing restoration of probably the most important historic resource in the City of Carmel."

As with the past projects, which cost several million dollars, much of the funding for the restoration work is being raised by the nonprofit Carmel Mission Foundation.

PROJECTILE

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cide whether there's sufficient cause to proceed with the case against him — have been repeatedly scheduled and delayed over the past several months, at least in part due to the huge amount of information the prosecution is gathering and turning over to the defense.

By late February, the Monterey County District Attorney's Office had already turned over more than 600 pages of reports, and apparently it wasn't finished. Lafferty had been on track to appear for a preliminary hearing Oct. 15, but that's now been delayed until Jan. 7, 2021, with both sides checking in with the judge two days prior to confirm they are ready to go.

Digital forensics

"We turned over to the defense a voluminous report detailing our analysis of the digital forensics," Monterey County Chief Assistant District Attorney Berkley Brannon told The Pine Cone. "It was completed shortly before the court appearance. That prompted the defense to request a continuance."

The attacks Lafferty is accused of committing go back to February 2019, when the first reports of a mysterious object smashing the windows of passing cars on Highways 101 and 152 in the Prunedale area started coming in. In the fall and winter of last year, they escalated, with several incidents of multiple vehicles hit within a short period of time. Among the victims were the Carmel High School football players whose bus was hit by a projectile while they were on their way to a playoff game in San Jose last November.

In early January, a task force of five California Highway Patrol officers and a Monterey County Sheriff's deputy got a break in the case by spotting a GMC Sonoma pickup near the scene of a recent attack. Their investigation and surveillance led them to Lafferty, who was apparently dividing his time between Monterey and San Luis Obispo counties. They got warrants to search his homes and the truck, and arrested him at a house in Nipomo.

Lafferty remains in Monterey County Jail on \$517,000 bail.

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