

EXHIBIT 15

Expert submissions in support for bronze statue as Landmark



Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
City of San Buena Ventura
501 Poli Street
Ventura, CA 93001

14 July 2020

Re: Junipero Serra Statue Landmark

Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council,

I am writing to you as a historic preservation professional of over 40 years who also served on the Ventura Historic Preservation Commission from 1975 to 1982, including a term as chair. I conducted the first Historic Resources Survey for the City of Ventura in 1983 and wrote a book on the history of Ventura County. Therefore I feel qualified to comment and offer a professional opinion on whether the present Junipero Serra statue is eligible as a City Landmark.

The historic report prepared by Historic Resources Group (HRG) concluded that the landmark was the statue designated in 1974, and that the landmark is still this original statue. This statue has been stored in a crate in deteriorated condition in a private industrial yard for 31 years. I don't believe anyone who was involved with the reproduction of the statue in 1989 felt the deteriorating statue being placed in storage was the landmark.

In fact concerned members of the community along with City Council member Russ Burns spearheaded the campaign to replace the original statue with an exact replica in a more durable material for the purposes of preserving the landmark. During the dedication ceremony in October 1989, it was announced to a huge crowd attending the event that the new statue was the "renewed" landmark. The Historic Preservation Commission and the City Council did not at the time delist the City Landmark. Rather everyone accepted the new statue as the landmark. It continued to appear on the city's list of landmarks on its website and in the Historic Resources Survey update completed by HRG in 2007. To my knowledge, the only time the landmark status for the reproduced statue was ever questioned is when HRG prepared the recent report for the city. Consequently I take issue with the conclusion that the landmark is the statue in storage. This was certainly never the intention of the many who were involved in the creation of the reproduction. Their explicit purpose was its preservation.

The HRG report also addressed the issue of whether the present statue meets the Historic Landmark criteria for City Landmark designation and found that it does not. I disagree with this findings on several points.

HRG found that the current statue is of insufficient age of to be designated, stating that it must be at least 40 years of age. I believe this to be an incorrect reading of the city's ordinance, which establishes no age restrictions for landmark designation. In fact the original Serra statue was designated as a landmark in 1974 when it was only 38 years old. I believe the present statue at nearly 31 years of age can qualify for landmark designation if it meets one or more of the landmark criteria. I have reviewed the City Landmark criteria and conclude that the present statue qualifies as a City Landmark under Criteria a, d, and e. The criteria are as follows:

Landmark means any real property such as building, structure, or archaeological excavation, or object that is unique or significant because of its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship or aesthetic feeling, and is associated with:

Junipero Serra Statue Landmark

(a) Events that have made a meaningful contribution to the nation, state or community.

The six-year process that eventually led to the project to replicate the deteriorating stone Serra statue in 1989 constitutes a meaningful event for the Ventura community. Expressions of concern over the deterioration of this City Landmark began in 1983 when City Councilman Russell Burns, a mechanical engineer, made a presentation to the City Council describing the severe deterioration of the statue and concluding that it might soon fall apart if action was not taken. This led in 1984 to the City Council commissioning studies by an art conservator, an engineer, and a concrete specialist. These studies led to the conclusion that the statue was too fragile even to make molds from. Councilman Burns then proposed that an exact wood replica be made of the statue that could be used to make molds in which to cast a bronze replica of the original statue.

The City adopted this plan in 1986 and budgeted an initial sum of \$15,000 to begin the project. Ventura master carver Wilbur Rubottom and a team of carvers from the Channel Islands Carvers group supplied a team of 16 men who spent 10,000 hours over a 14 month period on the wood reproduction, which was completed in 1988. The work was done at the Livery in downtown Ventura, where hundreds of visitors watched the carvers at work. The huge block of wood was even moved to the Ventura Fairgrounds in 1987 allowing even more members of the public to witness the process. During this time \$100,000 was raised from the community for the completion of the work. Thousands responded to the direct mail campaign and sales of Father Serra posters, caps, and t-shirts, as well as an 18-inch bronze replica of the Serra statue, to bring in the needed funds. Once the carving was complete the City of Ventura hired student artists from the California Sculpture Center at College of the Desert in Palm Desert, who made latex molds from the wood statue at the Livery, then casting the bronze statue using the lost wax technique. On October 20, 1989, the statue was dedicated on the site of the original statue in front of City Hall, an event attended by hundreds of citizens and dignitaries. A film was made of this special event that talks about the effort to preserve the landmark.

The conclusion drawn from this history is the overwhelming support of the Ventura community led to the preservation of the John Palo-Kangas designed statue, a designated a City Landmark. This event was a meaningful contribution to the Ventura community, as defined in Criterion (a) of the ordinance.

(d) Embodying the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction;

The statue should be considered eligible under this criterion because it embodies the distinctive characteristics of WPA-era public sculpture. Artworks funded by the WPA's Federal Arts Project during the 1930s were typically abstracted, social-realist, or over-scaled in the heroic style. The artist John Palo-Kangas responsible for this sculpture was known for his works in this genre. The Serra statue is the only example of a Federal Art Project public sculpture in Ventura, and likely in the entire county.

(e) The work of one or more master builders, designers, artists or architects whose talents influenced their historical period, or work that otherwise possesses high artistic value;

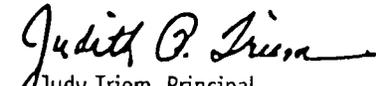
The Serra statue is eligible under this criterion as an exact replica of the work of the artist John Palo-Kangas, with the exception of materials, a choice that was made deliberately to ensure its preservation. Palo-Kangas is a well known sculptor in the Works Progress Administration (WPA) Federal Arts Project who has been cited in the art literature for his work of the abstract heroic style specific to this period. Palo-Kangas produced a number of exceptional sculptures during this time including a statue of Father Garces for the City of Bakersfield. For this work he used a single block of limestone from Indiana that weighed approximately 24 tons and was cut down to carve a likeness of the priest over sixteen feet high. Kangas achieved notoriety for his first

Junipero Serra Statue Landmark

work on the FAP by carving a father, mother and child from red sandstone. After these notable works he produced the heroic-scaled Junipero Serra. The present Serra statue has retained its integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, and aesthetic feeling sufficient to convey its significance.

In conclusion, in my professional opinion, the current Serra statue should be regarded as City Landmark #3 as designated by the City Council in 1974. Should the city not make this finding, the reproduction should be regarded as eligible for designation under three criteria in the city's ordinance cited above. Either way I feel it is important for the statue to retain City Landmark status, whether it is retained in its existing location or moved, in order to ensure its future protection.

Sincerely,


Judith P. Triem, Principal

San Buenaventura Research Associates

**Expert Submission of Anthony
Grumbine (July 14, 2020 & July 1, 2020)**

Dear City of Ventura Historic Mayor and City Council Members,

My name is Anthony Grumbine, and I write to you as a very concerned professional with the following credentials:

- *Current Chair of the City of Santa Barbara Historic Landmarks Commission and Architecture Historian for the Commission*
- *Architect involved in restoration of numerous historic structures including City, State and National Landmarks such as the Alhecama Theatre, El Presidio de Santa Barbara State Park and San Gabriel Mission*
- *Author of many articles on the historic architecture of Southern California, and regular speaker on the subject*
- *Author of the City of Santa Barbara's Historic Architecture Style Guide*

With the above credentials, I write to you as someone immersed in the field of historic preservation and very concerned with the direction the recent events have taken. In my mind, there are two key points to make.

- 1) The first is that the bronze statue is clearly a historic resource, a Landmark, and even a Historic Landmark.
- 2) The second point is that the Chumash, and others who have contributed to the history of the City of Ventura, should be recognized and celebrated through building planned, effective and POSITIVE new monuments and actions.

THE BRONZE STATUE, A HISTORIC LANDMARK

The obviously rushed historic report (written in a week or so, when they usually take 1-2 months minimum so that they can be properly researched) that guided the Historic Preservation Commission's findings is, in my opinion, incredibly flawed. If this report came before before my commission, as the architecture historian, I would not be able to accept its findings for a number of reasons, including the following:

- 1) The historian used argumentation from the Secretary of the Interiors Standards, which are dated 8+ years after the project of the statue was begun, and 6 years after the statue was installed. They did not analyze the most obvious questions: *Why was the City of Ventura so blatantly wrong in claiming for the last 31 years that the bronze statue was a historic Landmark on every document it produced?* How was this somehow missed when they installed the bronze statue? If they had researched the history (and there is even a book about it that they did not list in their bibliography!), they would have found the clear intent and transferal of Landmark status to the bronze statue. I have not researched it enough to know for sure, but it looks like there is also reason to believe the concrete and the wood statue were implicated as also being

part of the landmark re-designation. This should be researched more to define the nuances and implications for both the old concrete statue, and the wooden 1989 statue.

- 2) The creation of the bronze statue as a substitute/stand-in was - even by recent/current Secretary of Interiors standards - a valid form of treatment for a Historic Landmark as a *Reconstruction* as seen in the current Department of the Interiors Standards <https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/four-treatments/treatment-reconstruction.htm> Reconstruction is not the ideal choice (#1 Preservation, #2 Rehabilitation, #3 Restoration, and then #4 Reconstruction), but it certainly is a valid form of treatment for a landmark, even by current standards (1980s standards should have been, but were not discussed in the historic report). The change to bronze is a valid change due to the weathering that the previous statue underwent, and the desire to have the bronze statue last longer than its important setting. This reconstruction is similar to the rebuilding of other Ventura Landmarks, which were destroyed by fires.
- 3) The bronze statue, in its own right, is Landmark worthy both for its artistry/craftsmanship (it is not only the most famous artists in the country that get this finding) AND for its inventive and new method of creation that used both new, modern methods in combination with historic last-wax methods. Either of these reasons alone make it Landmark worthy.
- 4) Aside from the statue itself, there is also a second clearly-missed analysis of the importance of a statue of Fr. Serra in relationship to its context/site. Ending the central axis of California Street and as the central feature in front of the Courthouse/City Hall, there is a very specific spatial relationship that has been a critical feature in one of the most obvious and important locations in the City. The prominent relationship of the statue of Fr. Serra, for over half a century in that exact spot in front of the A.C. Martin Courthouse/City Hall cannot be overstated, and was not analyzed at all.

There are many other facts about the statue's history that will be uncovered with a proper historic structures report. I know this from the little research I have done on this subject to write this letter. To confirm this, however, I spoke with very well respected historians that know about the statue, and who I regularly deal with on a professional level, and they agreed with my initial assessment, and the disagree with the previous written Historic Report.

It would be very easy for any number of local historians to write a full report that documents the important history of the bronze statue, which would have conclusions contrary to the report funded by the City of Ventura, and state the obvious fact that the City has known all along: The bronze statue IS a historic landmark.

The statue deserves a proper historic analysis. Please provide it before moving forward.

A FUTURE FOR THE CHUMASH (AND OTHERS) RECOGNIZED IN THE LIFE OF THE CITY

This, I think, is the critical question at hand. How does a community move forward in a good and healthy manner which can be both critical of our history, and build to a better future.

Regarding positive ways to move forward, I wanted to share what the Historic Landmarks Commission in Santa Barbara is doing. A few weeks ago, we received hundreds of letters from Black Lives Matter regarding several buildings they wanted designated as landmarks. We welcomed the request (some of them were already in process and/or on-the-radar). Several historian community members including one of our Commission members, pulled together to write the HSSR for one of the properties which was reviewed, unanimously supported, and moved on to City Council to be Landmarked.

Our HLC designation subcommittee also met with BLM the following week to discuss a more wholistic study/survey/context statement for communities that have been a part of the City of Santa Barbara's history, but which we have not been written about extensively, including the African American community. It is a wonderful opportunity to pull more up from the city's rich history of different communities. These structures and sites can then be identified for interpretation to celebrate the contributions of the various communities in the formation of civil society.

This will be a positive way in which, we can be part of building up all cultures that have been part of making our city great, rather than trying to find ways to tear down important monuments and sites from our city's history.

If you would like more information on what the City of Santa Barbara is doing, I encourage you to contact the Urban Historian Nicole Hernandez. She is even looking into grant funding opportunities for these types of reports, so funding should not be an issue.

Sincerely,

Anthony Grumbine, AIA

Tracy Oehler

From: Family Zamora [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, June 29, 2020 7:06 PM
To: City Clerk
Subject: -EXT- HPCA MEETING 7/1/20 - AGENDA ITEM 1

Re. City of Ventura Historic Preservation Committee Agenda, Meeting 7/1/2020, Item 1.

I respectfully urge the Committee to reject staff's recommended action for this project, and to instead deny the Project #14599 outright and close this item in session.

The Project #14599 is entirely erroneous in its conception and its purpose. The heart of the problem is twofold:

1. The Applicant's submitted report, Attachment B, Historic Assessment Report re. Junipero Serra Statue, Ventura, June 25, 2020, by Historic Resources Group, Pasadena, CA, asserts a crucial error, along with many true facts that are all couched in professional language that have no relevance to the project.
2. The Applicant is the City, the very body with the sole authority to declare landmarks, which maintains a de facto conflict of interest and established prejudice regarding the outcome of this project that disqualify it from acting as an applicant on such a project.

First, the error: Page 11 of the Historic Assessment Report falsely classifies the bronze statue as a replica instead of a replacement, when its own quotation, taken from the base of the statue in question, clearly states that the bronze statue is a "replacement", not a "replica" or "simulation". Whether or not the process for approving this replacement meets current standards is entirely abstract and irrelevant because the replacement was approved before any of the current rules invoked in the report, from the City (2005) and National Park Service (1995), post-date the replacement at hand (1989)!

Then, error compounded by confusion: pages 13-21 of the Historic Report contain many assertions from the State of California Office of Historic Preservation and the US Department of Interior that are all appropriate for a new nomination for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, which is a listing entirely separate and independent of the City's current list of local landmarks, which list includes the bronze Serra Statue.

Another misleading assertion in the Historic Report is on page 4, that "The 1989 bronze replica has not been individually designated by the City Council and is not part of the 1974 Landmark designation. It does not meet the 40-year threshold generally required for historic designation in the City of Ventura. As a commemorative statue that is a replica [...] the 1989 statue is not potentially significant in its own right."

The statement is misleading because (1) the statue is falsely described as a replica and a commemorative statue, instead of the replacement that it is, and was always intended to be, of the defunct and unsustainable concrete statue that it replaced and, (2) also because the statue never needed to be individually designated - it is a replacement of an artifact - and it has always been ipso facto part of the 1974 landmark designation and, (3) the general 40 year "requirement" cited is a notional standard that is, in fact, contained nowhere in the city's Historic Preservation Regulations.

Other misleading aspects to the Report include the statements "the original 1936 cast stone sculpture remains designated Ventura Landmark #3" (p. 4), when said designation also explicitly describes the bronze replacement statue as the landmark in replacement of the defunct concrete original in storage, and that the bronze replacement statue is "not a historical resource as defined by CEQA" (p. 4), which its listing in the City Landmarks lists published in 2014 and 2016 and maintained currently as official public Planning Guidance by the city as official City web-documents #2399 (5/5/14) and #7730 (5/3/16).

The appropriate action for the Committee is therefore Not to acknowledge that the 1989 Father Serra Statue in front of City Hall is not a historic landmark, and also Not to find that the project is exempt from CEQA under the "General Rule" exemption, but instead to simply remind the applicant, staff, and people of Ventura that the Bronze Statue of Father Serra in front of City Hall is, in fact, already a City Landmark as published most recently by the City in 2014 and 2016.

Furthermore, I respectfully urge the Committee to note that the applicant has not followed any of the rules in the City Municipal Code established for the removal or demolition of (its own!) designated landmark and I reiterate, finally, that the applicant, who is the City, is the very body with the sole authority to declare landmarks, asserting in the project a conflict of interest and an established prejudice regarding its outcome of this project that disqualify it from any action in this matter whatsoever.

Yours Sincerely,

Gabriel A. Zamora


Santa Paula, CA 93060
Ventura County

CAUTION: This email originated from outside the City of Ventura. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Tracy Oehler

From: Family Zamora [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, June 30, 2020 12:53 AM
To: SP Conservancy; sbconservancy@mac.com; City Clerk
Subject: -EXT- Please Preserve Bronze St. Serra Statue Landmark Masterpiece in Ventura Today
Attachments: City-Historic-Landmarks_041018_201804181459195301.pdf; Designated%20Historic%20Landmark%20Descriptions%20(PDF).pdf; 2020-07-01_Agenda.pdf; 2020-07-01_Item-1_PROJ-14599.pdf; FatherJuniperoLetter6-2020-Eng-Span.pdf

URGENT: Please note that on this Wednesday "The HPC will NOT be discussing whether the statue should be retained or removed."

Please contact the City of Ventura, the San Buenaventura Conservancy, and the Santa Paula Conservancy, to support the bronze Serra Statue Landmark Preservation before the next city meeting on Wednesday July 1, 2020:

cityclerk@cityofventura.ca.gov
sbconservancy@mac.com
conservancysp@gmail.com

The bronze Serra Statue's landmark status is defined by City of Ventura listings in 2014 and 2016:

"CITY OF SAN BUENAVENTURA HISTORIC LANDMARKS & DISTRICTS

3. Father Serra Statue 501 Poli Street Designated February 11, 1974

This bronze statue was designed by John Palo Kanges and represents an idealized image of Father Junipero Serra, the founder of Mission San Buenaventura. Located in front of Ventura's City Hall on California Street, the original cement statue, a WPA project, was unveiled in November 1936. Due to weathering, the original statue was placed in storage in 1989 and replaced by the present bronze one. The wooden statue used to mold the bronze statue is located in the atrium of the City Hall."

Ventura forbids the demolition or relocation of a designated historic Landmark.

California CEQA law facilitates Landmark engagement that is professionally certified and publicly found to create no detrimental impacts upon the Landmark prior to any actual engagement.

None of the Ventura requirements for demolition or relocation of the Serra Landmark have been enforced.

MGZ

CAUTION: This email originated from outside the City of Ventura. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

CITY OF SAN BUENAVENTURA
HISTORIC LANDMARKS & DISTRICTS

May 3, 2016

NO.	HISTORIC NAME	ADDRESS
1.	Olivas Adobe Designated February 11, 1974	4200 Olivas Park Drive SL/NRHP/CA VEN 815H

This two-story Monterey style adobe was the center of San Miguel Rancho. Built in 1847 by Don Raymundo Olivas, a prominent cattle and sheep rancher, it was owned by the family until 1899. Restored in the late 1920's by millionaire Max Fleischmann, of Fleischmann Yeast and Margarine fame, for use as a hunting lodge, the historic house was given to the City of San Buenaventura in 1961. Now a historic museum, it is dedicated to Ventura's rancho heritage.

2.	Ortega Adobe Designated February 11, 1974	215 W. Main Street CA VEN 785H
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Emigdio Miguel Ortega, grandson of Josef Francisco de Ortega, discoverer of San Francisco Bay in 1734, and comandante of Santa Barbara in 1782, was born at Mission San Diego. Emigdio was appointed Sergeant of the Santa Barbara Company in 1811-1818 and comisionado at Los Angeles in 1918. He married Concepcion Dominguez at Mission Santa Barbara. Through the land grant of 1830 1850 for Rancho Ex Mission San Buenaventura from Govenor Pio Pico, he bought the 200 x 200 foot lot and built the adobe in 1855 57. The west half of the adobe was washed away by the floods of 1862 and rebuilt using the original roof tiles from the Mission San Buenaventura. In 1897, Emilio C. Ortega, son of Emigdio and Concepcion, began and operated from the adobe, the now famous Ortega Chili Factory.

3.	Father Serra Statue Designated February 11, 1974	501 Poli Street
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This bronze statue was designed by John Palo Kanges and represents an idealized image of Father Junipero Serra, the founder of Mission San Buenaventura. Located in front of Ventura's City Hall on California Street, the original cement statue, a WPA project, was unveiled in November 1936. Due to weathering, the original statue was placed in storage in 1989 and replaced by the present bronze one. The wooden statue used to mold the bronze statue is located in the atrium of the City Hall.

NOTE: Entire 2016 report was attached to email.
Only the page showing Father Serra Statue is
included in this post. Adam

**CITY OF SAN BUENAVENTURA
HISTORIC LANDMARKS & DISTRICTS**

May 5, 2014

<u>NO.</u>	<u>HISTORIC NAME</u>	<u>ADDRESS</u>
1.	Olivas Adobe Designated February 11, 1974	4200 Olivas Park Drive SL/NRHP/CA VEN 815H

This two-story Monterey style adobe was the center of San Miguel Rancho. Built in 1847 by Don Raymundo Olivas, a prominent cattle and sheep rancher, it was owned by the family until 1899. Restored in the late 1920's by millionaire Max Fleischmann, of Fleischmann Yeast and Margarine fame, for use as a hunting lodge, the historic house was given to the City of San Buena Ventura in 1961. Now a historic museum, it is dedicated to Ventura's rancho heritage.

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NOTE: Entire 2014 report was attached to email.
Only page showing Father Serra Statue
is included in this post. *Adrian*