

Brooke Larsen

From: carolyn mann <mann95432@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, November 30, 2022 9:48 AM
To: pbscommissions
Cc: dan333@me.com
Subject: Public Comment - MHRB Case #2022-0007 (Robinson)

To: MENDOCINO HISTORICAL REVIEW BOARD
From: CAROLYN S MANN

Re: Public Comment on MHRB Case #2022-0007 (Robinson)

Date: Nov. 30, 2022 - Public Hearing on Dec. 5, 2022

Dear Members of MHRB:

My name is Carolyn Mann and my husband and I live at 41065 C Little Lake Street which is located across the street from the Robinson property at 45080 Little Lake Street. We are very familiar with this property including its prior state before it was sold to the current owners. Prior to its recent purchase it was quite overgrown and neglected. It was rented out as temporary office and studio space while it was listed for sale which, for lack of interested buyers, remained on the market for quite some time. The present owners have, without changing the building, firmed up hinges on sagging gates, cleared soil from bottoms of fences which were rotting, and most of all cut back and elegantly pruned the overgrown trees and shrubs which helps all who pass by enjoy this custom built, natural redwood house from the 1970s which adds to Mendocino's architectural character. I have learned that both owners are knowledgeable and skilled gardeners; they have in a very short time lifted this property from relative obscurity to something quite wonderful as attested by the many locals and visitors who stopped by every day during the tourist season to compliment them or take pictures as they pass by.

I want to share my knowledge about the issues listed in this permit review and add one other subject I think might be of general interest to our neighborhood:

Driveway and Repairs

I know the property owners recycle much of their water, and actively work toward returning water to the aquifer. My understanding is that the use of porous gravel allows the water to more easily perk and I think a very good idea for Mendocino in general. I see that gravel as a substance for the driveway has been approved before and in my opinion is a welcome and natural solution, and attractive and nontoxic. I can't really think of a better solution for the water situation in Mendocino while contributing to Mendocino's natural appearance.

Regarding repairs, I have personally witnessed the mending of the gate in front and removing the dirt under the fences. The owners re-used existing hardware and stabilized rotted wood areas with existing wood. Like these examples, many of their repairs are true restorations and I admire their interest in providing that level of integrity and attention to detail. They have generally mended and cleaned up the property in seemingly simple ways that make a big difference such as ventilation under the house. They also installed a water tank with a low profile (addressed below) and have generally addressed some of the deficiencies that have accumulated from many years of neglect. With the exception of the water tank most improvements are fairly invisible but make the difference between a cared for and pleasant property and one that looks sad. I trust them to continue to do restoration style renovations as they proceed. It is what they enjoy doing and they truly honor the redwood structure and hand made qualities of the building which they very much admire.

Installation of 2500 Gallon Water Tank

The Robinsons interviewed neighbors, including me, to learn about our experience during the water shortage of 2021 when wells ran dry and many owners bought larger water storage tanks due to high delivery costs. Later in the drought water deliveries even became difficult due to the lack of water at all on the coast. In my own yard, a smaller tank was replaced with a 5,000 gallon one. The Robinsons needed to prepare for what may come and selected a tank with a relatively low profile in consideration of the neighbors to the side. I think they made a good choice and due to their unique

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ability in landscaping I believe the final result once bushes and landscaping is complete will not be visible except as an attractive garden feature.

Landscaping

Both owners are gifted gardeners and I am one of many who enjoy what they have done in such a short a time. The pruning alone has created a beautiful yard, but cutting back so much overgrowth revealed a yard that was barren and some planting was needed to avoid weed and grass regrowth. I am so very grateful that the owners are also organic gardeners for the health of local wildlife and neighbors pets and local environment, and they practice water conservation better than anyone I know, which supports Mendocino's water table. I have purchased native plants with them which they have integrated into their garden. The native plants include species from right here on the coast, to California native species that are not thriving in other locations due to climate change. All these will need no water once established. The owners also grow long blooming flowers for birds and pollinators already stressed by climate change. Their knowledge of composting and mulching conserves water as does the water recycling. I know this because we exchange plants, purchase plants together, and generally talk about gardening. I love their garden and so do all the people who stop to admire it. I trust that any landscaping they do will continue what they have begun, will be good for the environment, and continue to bring joy to all the people who see it. Please, come and see it!

Commercial to Residential

I wholeheartedly agree with the change to residential. Several of the commercial buildings on Little Lake Street have had difficulty finding tenants whereas there is a real lack of space for people to live. More residences please, especially if some of the commercial space which is not always occupied can be converted.

Parking

The Robinson property is situated between Covelo Street to the north (the back of the property) and Little Lake Street on the south (the front of the property). There is ample parking for locals and visitors on Little Lake Street which is one of the widest streets in Mendocino. The businesses across the street from the Robinsons have dedicated parking spaces which are seldom full, and tourists especially the ones driving vans and motor homes park parallel or diagonally on the Robinson's side of the street either in front of their house or in front of Century 21's vacant lot. Even when large motor homes are parked in front of the Robinson's there is still room for pedestrians to walk. I have heard the Robinson's encourage people to park in front of their home even if the visitor is doing business across the street. They are very kind to strangers and very welcoming of people parking in front of their house, and in this way contribute to Mendocino's image as a friendly and welcoming town.

The Robinson property's back gate is on Covelo Street and the property has ample space for visitors within property boundaries. However many neighbors and their visitors must park on Covelo Street and both sides are used to parallel park reducing Covelo to a one lane road at times. The Robinson property has this type of street parking to the west of their driveway. The east side of the driveway has a school sign post which prevents parking and the overgrowth of a large tree has prevented street parking near tree and sign. The owners have cleared and pruned the area and replaced the grass and weeds with plants but their fence is still tangled in tree branches and I assume a work in progress. It does not appear to me that the Robinson's work at the back of the property have affected the amount of parking that has been available in the past.

I am available to answer any questions. My home telephone number is 707-877-1842 and email is mann95432@yahoo.com. Thank you for the opportunity to share my experience and opinions about the Robinson property concerning the issues before your Board. As you can see from my comments I approve of my new neighbors' choices and value them as a positive contribution to my neighborhood. They are also kind and generous people who believe in supporting the people and businesses of our larger coastal community. I am very glad they are here, doing good.

C S Mann